

# **2016 MAFWA Committee Report on the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)**

## **MEETING TIME & PLACE**

CITES 28th Animals Committee, August 2015; Tel Aviv, ISR

AFWA Annual Meeting, September 2015; Tucson, AZ

Joint State/Federal CITES Meeting & AFWA International Relations Committee  
81st North American Wildlife & Natural Resource Conference, March 2016; Pittsburgh, PA

CITES Technical Work Group Meeting & AFWA International Relations Committee  
Interagency CITES Coordination Committee, hosted monthly by USFWS in Washington DC  
CITES Technical Work Group also conducted business via numerous conference calls

## **CITES TECHNICAL WORK GROUP REPRESENTATIVES**

Carolyn Caldwell- MAFWA (MAFWA CITES Technical Work Group Representative)

Jack Buckley- NEAFWA (Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife)

Buddy Baker- SEAFWA (Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries)

Jim deVos- WAFWA (Arizona Game & Fish Department)

Deborah Hahn- Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies

Bob Broscheid- U.S. CITES Delegate Representing the State Fish & Wildlife Agencies and  
International Relations Committee Co-Chair (Colorado Parks and Wildlife)

## **CITES OVERVIEW**

International wildlife trade is estimated to be worth billions of dollars annually. Trade is diverse, ranging from live animals to a wide array of products derived from them including food products, fur and leather goods, tourist curios, and medicine. CITES (Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) is an international trade treaty enacted in 1973 to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten species' survival. CITES works by subjecting international trade in specimens of selected species to certain controls. These require that all imports, exports and re-exports of CITES species have to be authorized. The species covered by CITES are listed in three Appendices, according to the degree of protection they need. Appendix I includes species threatened with extinction. Trade in specimens of these species is only permitted in exceptional circumstances. Appendix II includes species not necessarily threatened with extinction, but for whom trade must be controlled in order to avoid utilization incompatible with their survival. Appendix III contains species that are protected in at least one country, which has asked other CITES countries for assistance in documenting trade.

International treaties impact state fish and wildlife agencies and represent a continuous and pressing challenge to resource management. Left unchecked, additional regulations and burdensome oversight will result from restrictions adopted through these international treaties. For example, some state management and harvest decisions for bobcats and river otters stem from restrictions dictated by the federal government resulting from CITES actions taken more than three decades ago. The original intent of CITES was to ensure globally sustainable use of natural resources. Over the past decade, NGO participation (e.g., HSUS and the Animal Welfare Institute) has greatly increased and pushed a protectionist/no use approach in CITES for well managed species. Protectionists outnumber sustainable use advocates 6:1.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Office of International Affairs, administers CITES for the United States. The USFWS solicits input and feedback on issues of importance from the state fish and wildlife agencies through the CITES Technical Work Group of the International Relations Committee of AFWA. The Technical Work Group consists of one representative from each of the four regional associations who work on behalf of states in concert with the USFWS on CITES matters. This state-federal partnership has been effectively working since 1994.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OVERVIEW**

CITES updates presented in greater detail in this document include: 1) Federal Register Notices related to CITES CoP17; 2) Engaging partners on potential species proposals for CITES CoP17; 3) Freshwater turtles CITES Appendix III listing; 4) CITES briefing in the U.S. House and Senate; 5) CITES 28th Animals Committee; and 6) The role of State Fish and Wildlife Agencies in CITES Multi-State Grant wrap-up.

## **DIRECTOR ACTION ITEM**

No action Items at this time.

## **DIRECTOR INFORMATION ITEMS**

### **Federal Register Notices Related to CITES CoP17**

State Fish and Wildlife Agency comments were submitted on two Federal Register notices related to species proposals, resolutions, and decisions potentially moving forward at the CITES Conference of the Parties in October 2016. Comments were also provided on potential proposals being advanced by other countries for Thresher and Silky Sharks and the Peregrine Falcon. The input received from the States helps to ensure the appropriate response on these matters is provided to the USFWS.

### **Engaging Partners on Potential Species Proposals for CITES CoP17**

The CITES Technical Work Group engaged with national and international government and NGO partners between CITES meetings to provide science based information about the conservation and management of species. Both the U.S. and the European Union (EU) were considering a listing of the American Eel. The Technical Work Group coordinated with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) regarding American Eel conservation. We had discussions with the EU and the Wildlife Conservation Society CITES representatives about the management and conservation actions being conducted by the ASMFC. In addition, we participated in a meeting between ASMFC and USFWS. In the end, the USFWS and the EU submitted a recommendation to gather more information on the status and management of all eel species as opposed to recommending a CITES listing at this time. We also facilitated conversations between the USFWS and the Department of Land and Natural Resources in the State of Hawaii on the conservation and management of Hawaiian Sandalwood. We continue to have open and transparent discussions. The USFWS decided not to bring a listing proposal for Hawaiian Sandalwood to CITES CoP17. The Technical Work Group also spent considerable time working with partners to support the conservation of Polar Bears. We attended a June 2015 meeting between government agencies and NGOs from Canada and the U.S. This positive meeting allowed partners with different viewpoints to share information and better understand the other positions. We also communicated with the USFWS, NGOs, the Council on Environmental Quality, U.S. State Department and Canadian members on our position on sustainable use, livelihoods, and polar bear conservation as it relates to trade and CITES. The U.S. government decided not to bring a Polar Bear uplisting proposal to CoP17.

### **Four Native Freshwater Turtle Species Inclusion in Appendix III**

With the listing of many species of Asian softshells at CoP16 (2013) and more proposed for CoP17 we anticipate continued demand for North American native species in international markets. In 2014 the USFWS proposed in a Federal Register Notice to include the common snapping turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*), Florida softshell turtle (*Apalone ferox*), smooth softshell turtle (*Apalone mutica*), and spiny softshell turtle (*Apalone spinifera*) in CITES Appendix III, including live and dead whole specimens, and all readily recognizable parts, products, and derivatives.

On May 23rd the USFWS announced the final rule to list the four species of native freshwater turtles in CITES Appendix III. By listing these species in CITES, the USFWS will ensure that international trade occurs at a sustainable level. The listing will become effective after 180 days on November 21, 2016.

Export of CITES Appendix III species from the U.S. requires a permit issued by the Service's Division of Management Authority (DMA). DMA will issue a permit only if the applicant obtained the specimen legally and live specimens are packed and shipped in accordance with International Air Transport Association (IATA) Live Animals Regulations. Any shipment containing wildlife must be declared to a Service Wildlife Inspector upon import, export, or re-export, and must comply with all applicable regulations.

### **CITES Briefings in the U.S. House and Senate**

CITES briefings were conducted in the House and the Senate to provide information on how and why the state fish and wildlife agencies participate in CITES and also to highlight the importance of sustainable use, livelihoods, and maintaining a scientific basis for CITES decisions. The briefings highlighted three case studies on American Alligator, Hawaiian Sandalwood, and Polar Bear. Canadian Provincial and Federal colleagues also attended these briefings.

### **CITES 28th Animals Committee Meeting**

The MAFWA, SEAFWA, and WAFWA CITES Technical Work Group members and Deb Hahn (AFWA) represented the state fish and wildlife agencies at the CITES 28th Animals Committee held from 30 August to 3 September 2015.

The Animals Committee discussed 23 substantive agenda items, including but not limited to: non-detriment findings; the review of significant trade in Appendix II species; the periodic review of animal species included in the Appendices; tortoises and freshwater turtles; and snake trade and conservation management. Fifty countries were represented with two hundred fourteen participants at the meeting including a significant number of NGOs representing groups such as the Humane Society International, Natural Resources Defense Council, and the Animal Welfare Institute. These organizations participated in the working groups and were vocal concerning many of the matters before the Animals Committee. Invariably these organizations offered interventions that were pushing for greater restrictions in trade.

The complete report of this meeting (attached) was previously provided to the Directors.

### **State Agencies Role in CITES and Their Authority to Manage Wildlife in the U.S.**

The CITES Technical Work Group received a multi-state grant in 2013 to conduct regional seminars and webinars; and develop outreach materials for state fish and wildlife agencies. Our goal was to

help state agency staff better understand the impacts and relationship of international treaties and conventions to their state management authority. Another component was to create a document (attached) to share with international partners to explain the role of state fish and wildlife agencies and how conservation is implemented in the U.S. Increased understanding of the state agencies role in and authority to manage wildlife will further improve our standing and reputation in international forums.

Workshops were held in 2014 and 2015 for each of the Regional Associations and a webinar was conducted in September 2015. Approximately 250 state fish and wildlife agency staff were involved in either the seminars or the webinar. The outreach document is available in English, Spanish, and French.

**TIME & PLACE OF NEXT MEETING**

AFWA Annual Meeting, September 2016; Philadelphia, PA  
Joint State/Federal CITES Meeting & AFWA International Relations Committee

Respectfully submitted by,

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